

Remarks

Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 1-3, 5-6, 8, 10, and 11 are pending in the application, with claims 1, 5, 8, and 10 being the independent claims. Claims 4, 7, and 9 are sought to be canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter therein. New claim 11 is sought to be added. Claim 6 is amended to further clarify the claim and to be more consistent with the language used in claim 3, for example. These changes are believed to introduce no new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested. Applicants believe that entry of these amendments after final are appropriate because they directly address the Examiner's stated concerns.

Based on the above amendment and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Allowable Claims 4 and 9

The Office Action states on pages 4-5 that claims 4 and 9 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for identifying claims 4 and 9 as allowable. Accordingly, Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 5, 8, and 10 to include the allowable features of claims 4 and 9. Thus, as amended, independent claims 1, 5, 8, and 10 are now allowable.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Office Action states on page 2 that claims 1-3, 5-7, 8, and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 6,199,154 B1 to Witt (hereinafter, "Witt"). Applicants have canceled claim 7. Thus, the rejection of claim 7 is now moot. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection with respect to claims 1-3, 5-6, 8, and 10.

As noted above, Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 5, 8, and 10 to include features of allowable claims 4 and 9. Thus, as amended, these claims are allowable for at least the same reasons that claims 4 and 9 are allowable. Claims 2-3 and 6 depend from claims 1 and 5, respectively, and are therefore also allowable. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-3, 5-6, 8, and 10 are respectfully requested.

Applicants reserve the right to pursue additional claims commensurate with the scope of the original claims in a continuing application.

New Claim 11

Applicants have added new claim 11. New claim 11 depends from independent claim 10 and recites features similar to originally presented claims 3, 6, and 8. Thus, support for new claim 11 is found, for example, in originally presented claims 3, 6, and 8. Because claim 11 depends from allowable independent claim 10, it is allowable for at least the same reasons that independent claim 10 is allowable, and further for the specific features it recites. Entry, consideration, and allowance of new claim 11 are respectfully requested.

Other Matters - Information Disclosure Statements Filed September 28, 2004

Applicants note that the Form PTO-1449 filed with an Information Disclosure Statement on September 28, 2004, was returned with the current Office Action and was signed by the Examiner in December 2004. However, Document AR1 was not initialed. In order to avoid any ambiguity as to whether this document was considered, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner initial and sign another copy of the Form PTO-1449 and return it to us to indicate that all of the cited documents have been considered.

In addition, an electronic Information Disclosure Statement citing twenty (20) documents that was also filed on September 28, 2004, was not returned to us. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner initial the appropriate portion of the electronic Information Disclosure Statement and return it to us to indicate that all of the cited documents have been considered.

Conclusion

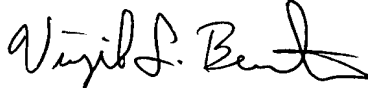
All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Kinter *et al.*
Appl. No. 09/836,541

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: 4/28/05

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